

TECHNICAL PRESS INSIDER

2nd October 2007

The newsletter for editors from *fishermarketing*

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Welcome to the latest issue of the *Technical Press Insider*, the electronic newsletter for editors in the technical media. *Technical Press Insider* contains summaries of some of the most important stories we've released this month, plus a few what's-on items you might find useful. And remember, you can get copies of all the press releases that we have issued on behalf of our clients from the press office on our website at www.fishermarketing.co.uk

If you think the content would be of interest to a friend or colleague please feel free to forward it, asking them to send their email address to join-tpi@fishermarketing.co.uk so they can receive future issues direct. To be removed from the circulation list, send an email to leave-tpi@fishermarketing.co.uk or to change the email address it's sent to, hit reply and let us know.

The next First Friday Club for Editors is on October 5th, where we have ABB and Seaward presenting, so keep an eye on your inbox for the invitation!

Simon Simmons

Next Issue: 31st October 2007

Publishing Talk

We would like to welcome Richard Scott, who recently took over from Tim Fryer as editor of EPA (Electrical Products & Applications) magazine and joins the new management team of Russell Goater - Group Publisher & Lee Cashman who has taken over as Group Sales Manager. Tim Fryer remains at IML as editor of EMT (Electronics Manufacture & Test).

As you might expect, the *Technical Press Insider* is the ideal vehicle for gossip, rants, jobs, freelancing opportunities and all manner of publishing activities... oh yes, and news. So, if you have something to say or you want some help, drop us a line and we will see what we can do.



What's Happening?

HazardEx in the Region - The Angel Hotel, Cardiff – Oct 2 – 01732 359900

Northern Manufacturing Exhibition 2007 – Hallam FM Arena, Sheffield – Oct 2-3 - 01784 880890

HazardEx in the Region - Ellesmereport Holiday Inn, Cheshire – Oct 16 - 01732 359900

HazardEx in the Region - The Ricca Forum, Stavanger, Norway – Oct 24 - 01732 359900

HazardEx in the Region - Delta Hotel (Port area), Rotterdam – Nov 7 - 01732 359900

Manufacturing Technology, Ireland 2007 – National Show Centre, Nr Dublin Airport – Nov 7-8 - 01784 880890

Thought for the month

Real challenges for a virtual community

Californian entrepreneur Philip Rosedale, and his company Linden Labs offer us Second Life, a 'virtual world' generated by a computer that claims to be an alternative to real life. It is now so popular it boasts around 10 million residents, and an economy generating more than US\$50 million a year.

Household names such as Ikea and Peugeot have rushed to take part, while some countries have even established virtual embassies in this cyber world. And now Endemol, the company that produces the 'Big Brother' reality TV programme, has announced that it will be hosting a special edition of the show inside the Second Life virtual world.

Participants, or at least their online representations in the form of cartoon-like avatars, will be confined in a house with transparent walls, and the winner will become the owner of a whole Second Life island. But who is going to care about the trials and tribulations of a bunch of pixels? Maybe the people behind the avatars should appear on webcam and remain in their homes for the duration of the contest to add some tactile realism to the programme.

Still, at least it will give the recently announced cyber-world gossip tabloid newspaper something to write about. The 'newspaper' is being set up by German publishers Axel Springer and promises "a colourful tabloid with snippets about show business and tales from the avatar world". It will be sold for Linden Dollars, the currency used throughout Second Life to buy goods.

It's easy to dismiss Second Life as just another over-hyped and inadequate online service, one that knows how to give journalists something to write about but is actually a distraction from the real work of building usable online environments.

Technology writer Andrew Orlowski has written a series of scathing articles in which he calls it "Sadville" and lampoons those who have so little to do in their real lives that they find Second Life interesting and engaging.

A valid criticism you might think. However, there is something going on here, something behind the hype and the reporting, and we should not underestimate the importance of Second Life as a space for social and technological experimentation.

It has a good-sized user-base, with millions of people having gone to the trouble of downloading the multi-megabyte client before registering a username and figuring out how to dress and move their avatars around the fast-growing world. A large proportion is spending a significant amount of time logged on, and they are using the tools available to construct virtual environments that others find engaging and interesting.

A small number are trading successfully, finding new ways to turn online activities into an income. Perhaps Axel Springer will even

find a new way of generating revenue for the newspaper industry, without having to buy a single roll of newsprint.

And it is not just the print media that is looking to source virtually. Sky News has called on Second Life residents to become virtual news reporters and submit videos about the 3D world.

Sky News has joined forces with video-sharing website SkyCast to launch a 'Reporters' Challenge'. The aim is for members of Second Life to create video reports on things they think have news value and relevance to the virtual community.

Second Life offers a vast playground, a safe place where we can try out new technologies, improve the interfaces and figure out what forms of social relationship work online.

However, there is a price to pay. Mr Rosedale and his company, Linden Labs, are facing lawsuits from furious residents who claim they have been ripped off. Where the legal proceeding are held remains to be seen, but I would stake money that Linden Labs have the best virtual lawyers available.

Simon

If you would like to comment on this or anything in TPI please drop us a line on simon@fishermarketing.co.uk



Headline Makers

Contact Fisher Marketing for the full story on any of these items



A leading automation supplier has extended its range of miniature circuit breakers with accessories. The expanded range now also includes busbars to provide simple and flexible connectivity in control panels. With its improved ratings the miniature circuit breakers can now offer a premium solution from a globally accepted product.

With its laser transmitter and advanced CMOS receiver, the new analogue distance sensor from a leading sensor manufacturer, masters almost all surfaces – from white to black, matt or glossy – with extremely high immunity to different ambient light conditions. Engineers and designers benefit by spending less time commissioning the system due to its tolerance of different surface types and lighting conditions.

Intelligent hydraulic valves from a leading manufacturer of servo-hydraulic and servo-electric drive systems are adding brain to muscle at metalworking company Bronx Manufacturing, which builds high quality, specialist mechanical equipment for a diverse range of industries, from automotive to construction and from security to mining. The West Midlands company, which has particular experience in metal forming and finishing within the steel industry, is fitting a Digital Interface Valve (DIV) to a new machine that levels coiled high strength low carbon steel strip. This is the first application of the DIV in the UK.

In motor racing, accurate torque control of threaded fasteners is absolutely essential. The danger of under or over-tightening threaded fasteners are self-evident, but as well as the drivers having the confidence to push the car to the edge, the workshop needs to have faith in the design integrity of every single component. A leading torque tool manufacturer's wrenches have long been the tools of choice for the Triple 8 team, the company behind VX Racing, the most successful team in the British Touring Car Championship's history. Chief mechanic Martin Ellis knows better than most the importance of accuracy.

Combining high-power performance with a space-saving design, the new liquid-cooled drive from a leading automation supplier delivers unrivalled application versatility. Its high-performance, energy-efficient liquid-cooled technology allows it to be installed in conditions where air-cooled drives may increase climatic control costs or where they simply could not operate, such as dusty locations.

A Redhill based Search and rescue technology specialist is delighted to announce that the new GME Accusat MT410 and MT410G, 406MHz personal location beacons that it introduced to the UK market earlier this year, now have type approval.

With effect from 1st May 2007, a supplier of predictive maintenance systems will supply its continuous thermal monitoring system with Lifetime Calibration and a Lifetime Warranty. The supplier has identified the reliability of the system as a key factor if it is to be entrusted to monitor mission-critical equipment, where failure could result in high downtime costs. The lifetime calibration and warranty will therefore be of particular interest to organisations such as data centres, continuous process or large-scale manufacturing.

A leading automation supplier has extended its range of miniature circuit breakers with accessories. The expanded range now also includes busbars to provide simple and flexible connectivity in control panels. With its improved ratings the miniature circuit breakers can now offer a premium solution from a globally accepted product.

The McKenna Hammerless Drain Valve from Alcoa World Alumina Australia has received the Highly Commended Award from Western Australia's Chamber of Minerals & Energy (CME) Occupational Safety and Health Innovations Awards. Based on the pneumatic torque wrench (torque gun) from a leading torque tool manufacturer, the hammerless drain valve is a tool that makes the task of opening refinery drain valves easier and safer at Alcoa World Alumina Australia's mine sites and refinery operations in Western Australia's Peel Region.

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For application stories or articles on a wide variety of topics or for any other information, please contact us directly on 01959 564987, or visit our press office at www.fishermarketing.co.uk

Headline Makers Continued

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A leading sensor manufacturer's camera-based inspection system has brought a new level of detail and accuracy to the inspection and robot picking of buns. The hamburger buns are inspected as a final step in an automated production line; faulty buns are rejected and those that pass are automatically packaged into boxes by a robot.

In new and retrofit applications, the new AC drives from a leading automation supplier give users economical, easy-to-program variable frequency motor control with feed-through wiring for quick installation. Engineered for ease of use, the AC drive helps users minimise mechanical machine stress and increase application flexibility.

Newly installed equipment, much of which is unique to the UK, has turned a specialist provider of engineered solutions for the Water, Wastewater and Process Industries' 24,000 tpa facility into one of the most advanced plastic recycling centres in Europe. The significant investment by its parent company has given them the capability to handle an even broader spread of post-consumer and industrial recyclable plastics.

A leading automation supplier has introduced new BACnet interface options for its AC drives, making it even easier for users to employ drive technology in building services applications.

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